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# FOREIGN AGRICULTURE ECONOMICS

FOREIGN CROP RECORDS

## The 1962 Crop Outlook in Communist Countries

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### SUMMARY<sup>1/</sup>

The Soviet Union and other Eastern European countries have suffered another disappointing crop year according to preliminary information.<sup>2/</sup> But in Communist China weather conditions have been better than the past 3 disastrous years and the crop outlook for 1962 improved somewhat.

Poor growing conditions were a major contributing factor in Eastern Europe's mediocre crop outlook. This was superimposed upon the problems which perennially plague agriculture in the Communist countries -- collectivization, rigid state controls of farm management, agriculture's disadvantageous position vis-a-vis industry, and lack of incentives to farmers. Spring field work was delayed throughout the area by cool, wet weather, a condition which prevailed all summer in the northern regions -- including East Germany, Poland, and the central and northwestern regions of European USSR. Conversely, crops were hard hit by summer drought in the Danubian countries, southern regions of European USSR, the Soviet Union's "Virgin Lands", and the cotton growing republics of Soviet Central Asia. As a result, yields and production of most major crops in 1962 are expected to be below average throughout Eastern Europe. The livestock industry in particular likely will suffer from tight feed supplies for the third consecutive year.

### SOVIET UNION

Stagnation in Soviet agricultural production has continued for the fourth consecutive year. This mediocre showing is indicated despite extensive restructuring of the crop pattern and an increase of 27 million acres in the sown area, which reached over 530 million acres this year. The immediate cause of the disappointing performance during 1962 was unfavorable weather in the major

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<sup>1/</sup> This report does not discuss the crop situation in several minor Communist countries.

<sup>2/</sup> Not all crops have been harvested and data are still incomplete even for early crops in a number of Communist countries.

agricultural areas. This was in addition to the ever-present handicaps under which agriculture in the USSR must function -- rigid state controls, shortages of capital, and insufficient producer incentives.

The increase of 27 million acres in the area sown to crops in 1962 was the largest annual increase since 1955, when the New Lands campaign was in full swing. Grains, which accounted for the major share of the increase, reached a record level of over 330 million acres. Substantial acreage increases were registered for wheat, corn (for silage and green feed), pulses, and sugarbeets for livestock feed. The increase in the areas planted to grains and certain feed crops was initiated by Khrushchev's current campaign to replace grasses, oats, and other "low yielding" crops with more productive grains and forage crops. As a result, the planted annual grass area declined 17.5 million acres this year, perennial grasses 8 million acres, and oats, more than 10 million acres.

Following a cold winter, which resulted in winter killing of a substantial area of fall sown grains, and an early thaw, spring field work was delayed by cool, wet weather. This condition continued throughout the summer in the central and northwestern regions of European USSR where up to twice the normal rainfall was recorded during the growing season. Conversely, crops in the southern areas of European USSR, the New Lands region of Siberia and Kazakhstan, and the cotton growing republics of Soviet Central Asia were hard hit by summer drought. These conditions (cool, rainy weather in the northwest, and hot, dry weather in the south and east) indicate that yields and production of most major crops -- including grains, sugarbeets, sunflowers, flax and cotton -- likely will be below average. Output gains can be expected only in certain feed crops -- corn for silage and green feed, sugarbeets, and legumes, which all showed an increase in sown area. Yields of vegetables and potatoes, the areas which are virtually the same as last year, and usable hay are expected to be below average.

Because of a record increase in livestock numbers and increased prices to producers, meat production probably will increase, but remain considerably below ambitious government goals. Milk production, however, is not expected to increase because of the pressure of the increased cow herd on inadequate feed supplies.

#### POLAND

Polish agriculture was plagued by the same adverse weather which prevailed over much of central and northwestern Europe in 1962. As Gomulka stated at the Harvest Festival in Warsaw on August 9:

"This year's weather was not favorable to our agriculture. As a result, the crops are not as good as last year. At the same time, unfavorable winter conditions in southwestern parts of the country had a harmful effect on winter crops. Continuing frosts considerably retarded the growth of plants everywhere in the country. Exceptionally heavy precipitation, which in some districts assumed disastrous proportions, caused field work to be late and flooded crops over large areas. In some places, local floods forced farmers to plow under crops already sown, and to sow and plant again at unfavorable times.



...In northern parts of Poland, harvesting proceeded in bad weather, except for a favorable period at the beginning of August, and was considerably delayed."

Agricultural output, from a total sown area approximately the same as last year, is expected to be considerably below the bumper crop of 1961. Lower yields are expected to reduce total grain output at least 10 percent below the record level of 1961. Yields of root crops were even more severely reduced by the cool, wet growing season. Production of sugarbeets, which occupied approximately the same area, probably will be at least 20 percent below planned goals, while the potato crop may not amount to more than three-fourths of the 1961 crop. The only bright spot in Polish agriculture this year probably will be the rape seed harvest, which may be up as much as a third due to a significant increase in the area under winter rape for the second consecutive year. The outlook for fruit and vegetables is bleak. Vegetable production may be no more than half the planned output, while the fruit crop is expected to be 30-40 percent below the 1961 level.

According to Gomulka,

"The feed deficit remains the main source of our trouble. ... we have more stock to feed than a year ago whereas feed resources are less than last year."

However, goals for increasing livestock numbers are far from being attained. As of June 1962, hog numbers were up less than 1 percent over June 1961 compared with a planned increase of 6.1 percent; sheep numbers declined 6.8 percent over the same period, rather than remaining about the same and horse numbers did not decline as much as planned. Only the increase in cattle numbers, 4.7 percent, approached the plan.

#### CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Czechoslovak agriculture suffered in 1962 from unfavorable weather, continuing decline in labor force, and inadequate incentives. Fall-sown crops survived the winter poorly. Reportedly, considerably areas of the winter rape acreage had to be resown. The late, cold spring delayed sowing and resulted in some underfulfillment of sowing plans. Delays have been reported both in crop cultivation and harvesting. No recent data on crop yields are available, but indications, based on weather, progress of field work, and crop conditions observed in a few regions, all suggest that grain, rape seed, and perhaps vegetable production will be lower than in 1961. Sugarbeets and potatoes appear to have suffered less. Animal feedstuffs are reportedly short. Early 1962 reports show that livestock numbers have increased somewhat. However, the tight feed situation and the improvement in deliveries of beef and veal recently suggest that cattle numbers may decline. Deliveries of meat, milk, and eggs were below the target for months and the current improvement still leaves a deficit, especially for milk and eggs.

## EAST GERMANY

Indications are that crop production in East Germany again will be low in 1962, but should show a slight improvement over last year's exceptionally poor harvest.

Unusually cold weather during the spring and summer resulted in a 3-to 4-week lag in planting. The decline in sown area in 1961 was not regained in 1962. Instead, the area sown to grains declined another 70,000 hectares (9.7 percent) while the potato acreage increased less than 1 percent. This summer was the third coldest of this century and harvesting has been plagued by cool, wet weather with many stoppages due to rain. As a consequence, large numbers of soldiers, office workers, and industrial workers have been sent to the fields to assist in the harvest. Despite the complications occasioned by the weather, some improvement is expected over last year when the output of many major crops declined from 20 to 40 percent from the 1960 output.

The output of wheat and rye may increase about 10 percent over 1961, when production declined 20 percent. A 10 percent improvement this year will leave output still far below the 1960 level. An increase of perhaps 10 to 15 percent is expected in the potato crop compared to the decline of more than 40 percent in production last year. The sugarbeet crop, which was less adversely affected by the weather, should improve somewhat over the poor 1961 outturn. Attempts to make up for shortages in vegetables by special late summer plantings have been only partially successful. The vegetable and fruit crop is expected to be better than last year. Larger quantities of cauliflower and peas have been reported than for this date last year. Despite unfavorable weather a good fruit harvest has been claimed, especially pears and apples. The yields of beans, tomatoes, and cucumbers, however, are expected to be 15 to 20 percent below last year. The livestock feed supply, which has been inadequate for the last 3 years, is not expected to improve significantly in 1962. Recent shortages of milk have been blamed on shortages of animal feed. This indicates that, even with decreased livestock numbers, the feed situation is still critical.

## HUNGARY

Crop production in 1962 probably will be lower than in 1961 which was generally a below average year, except for wheat. Drought in the autumn of 1961 was followed by a protracted, dry winter. During the first half of 1962, precipitation was more than 25 percent below normal. Indications are that, following general rains in early July, dry weather again prevailed in August.

Although the area sown to breadgrains is up slightly, 1962 yields are down about 15 percent from the record year of 1961. Available information indicates that feedgrain production will be about 10 percent below the 1958-60 average. The effect of the drought on corn was reportedly most severe in the important southern regions of the Great Plain and Transdanubia. The late dry spring resulted in low yields in the first cutting of hay but the July rains reportedly improved the second cutting. There is little doubt that imports of breadgrains and feedgrains again will be necessary in 1962-63. The record level of hog numbers combined with the depletion of feedgrain stocks which took place in 1961 will probably necessitate larger imports of feedstuffs.



Yields of potatoes, onions, sugarbeets, and sunflower seed should exceed the very low yields obtained in 1961. Late spring, drought, and hail damage in the principal fruit producing regions point to a reduction in fruit production in 1962.

#### RUMANIA

Crop output in 1962 is likely to fall below 1961. Excessive precipitation in March and below normal temperatures which extended into June hindered planting, cultivation, and the development of crops. Precipitation during May, June, and July in the important grain producing regions was only about one-third normal. General rains during the first part of August facilitated summer plowing for winter grains, after which below normal rainfall persisted into September.

Available information points to a total grain crop about 15 to 20 percent lower than in 1961 and about 30 percent below the government plan. Although there was some increase in the area planted to breadgrains, production is expected to be down 10 to 15 percent. While no published official data on corn prospects are available, it appears that production will be significantly below 1961. The present crop situation combined with heavy exports of feed grains in 1960, 1961, and the first half of 1962, and reported rationing of corn meal in some rural areas, indicates that the relatively high cattle and swine numbers probably will decline.

#### BULGARIA

Bulgarian agriculture again suffered from a drought during May and June which was only partially relieved in July and August. On the whole, the crop outlook is for a harvest similar to the poor results achieved last year. The grain crop may be somewhat less; however the output of other crops -- especially tobacco, tomatoes, and fruits which are important export products -- should be the same or better. The difficult livestock feed situation has dominated the agricultural picture recently. Farmers have been urged to gather leaves for silage to supplement corn stalks. Corn stalks, reportedly would have to form the bulk of silage because drought reduced the output of corn. Some feed grain is being imported.

#### YUGOSLAVIA

The crop picture in 1962 is again disappointing to the Yugoslav planners. Winter grains generally were planted late following a prolonged drought in 1961. A late spring in 1962 was followed by drought in May and June. After an interruption by much needed rain in July drought continued in August and September.

The area sown to breadgrains was about 3 to 4 percent above 1961 while the area sown to feed grains was slightly less. Wheat production is estimated to be about 10 percent less than in 1961, which was about average. Reportedly, the quality of this year's wheat is good. It appears that feed grain production will be 5 to 10 percent below the 1958-61 average. The corn crop is expected to be about 5 percent above 1961, but barley and oat production is likely to be no better than in 1961. In view of last year's short corn crop and the fact

that this year's crop will not be much better, it seems unlikely that the export ban imposed in 1961 on corn will be lifted soon.

Late rains improved prospects for sugarbeets and sunflower seed. Tobacco production, severely curtailed by blue mold in 1961, is expected to be up about one-third. Blue mold has not been a serious problem in Yugoslavia this year, according to the Serbian Tobacco Institute. Production of fruits was below 1961. Cold weather during the bloom stage and extensive hail damage in some areas are expected to have reduced apple production. Plum production should be above average but below the good 1961 crop. This year's production of edible dry beans is about 5 percent higher than in 1961 according to newspaper reports. Production of potatoes and onions is officially estimated 7 to 14 percent respectively above the short crops of 1961 when imports were necessary. It was officially stated that these commodities will again be imported to avoid "considerable oscillations in prices this winter." Production of cotton and soft fibers probably will be below last year.

The second short feed and fodder year in a row will adversely affect livestock. Hardest hit this year are the mountainous areas of western Yugoslavia. Hog numbers, which decreased 11 percent last year due to a heavy slaughter of below weight animals, are not expected to increase in 1962 and may show some decrease. Cattle numbers probably will decline after a slight increase in 1961.

#### COMMUNIST CHINA

The weather picture as a whole is brighter for China than it has been for the past 3 years. There is an absence of widespread natural disaster. The damage from late frost, drought, floods, and typhoon winds has apparently been of local nature.

Limited reports from urban areas indicate that summer vegetable supplies increased with a rise in the tillage of private plots and expansion of private trading. The intermediate rice crop and the production of summer-grown grains are believed to be substantially higher than last year but only marginal gains were made in early grain production. Fall-harvested crops are reported by the Communists to be doing better than last year.

It is estimated tentatively that gross grain production for 1962 likely will exceed 1961 by 7-12 percent. Soybean production is expected to decline slightly despite increases in yields, due to decreased acreage. Cotton production is expected to rise 5-10 percent from last year but remain 15-20 percent below the high production figure estimated for 1958.

Despite the anticipated increases in food grain production, the Chinese Communists are expected to continue to import grain. Evidence is found in the request by the Communist Chinese for more liberal credit terms from the Canadians and in the continuing negotiations with the Australians for further grain purchases.

An important factor in the Chinese agricultural picture is the reversal of policy regarding the role of the agricultural sector in the overall development of the economy. Following the Second National People's Congress in April 1962,



a 10-point program was announced. This included retrenchment in heavy industry, increased support to agriculture in the form of greater supplies of tools, fertilizer, and insecticides and the transfer of urban workers back to the rural areas.



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